

estate tax bill. While I support estate tax relief that addresses family farms, small businesses, and principal residences, the approach taken by the majority in Congress is part of a \$2 trillion tax plan that would take us back to the days of deficits, high interest rates, and fiscal irresponsibility. This is a misguided bill that provides a huge tax cut for the most well-off Americans at the expense of working families. It is a key ingredient of a Republican tax plan that would leave nothing for Social Security, Medicare, education, or a voluntary, affordable prescription drug benefit.

This back-loaded bill explodes in cost from \$100 billion from 2001–10 to \$750 billion from 2011–20, just when Medicare and Social Security will come under strain. It benefits only 2 percent of all estates in America and provides half of its benefits to about 3,000 families annually, while more than 10 million Americans wait for an increase in the minimum wage and tens of millions of seniors lack dependable prescription drug coverage. Furthermore, studies by economists have found that repealing the estate tax would reduce charitable donations by \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year.

If the congressional leadership is serious about estate tax relief for small businesses, family farms, and principal residences of middle-class families that have increased in value, they should work with me in a fiscally responsible manner as Democrats in Congress have proposed. Together, we can strengthen Social Security and Medicare, invest in key priorities, and pay off the debt by 2012. This is the right priority for America.

**Statement on the Report of the
Interagency Commission on Crime
and Security in United States
Seaports**

September 7, 2000

I am pleased to receive the report of the Interagency Commission on Crime and Security in U.S. Seaports. In April 1999, I directed the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of Transportation to establish the Commission

to undertake a comprehensive study of the nature and extent of crime in our seaports and the state of security in those seaports. I also direct the Commission to review the ways in which Federal, State, and local governments are responding to the problem and develop recommendations for improving law enforcement and crime prevention.

Seaports are a key component of our Nation's Marine Transportation System and serve as major gateways for international commerce. As barriers to trade and travel are reduced and volumes of international cargo and passengers continue to grow, opportunities for criminals to exploit or disrupt maritime commerce increase. It is thus essential that we maintain effective security and border control measures to thwart criminals seeking to use our seaports for terrorism, fraud, theft, or smuggling of illegal drugs, migrants, weapons, and other contraband.

The Commission's report documents the current crime problem in seaports, identifies present and projected security threats, and recommends a number of useful measures aimed at reducing the vulnerability of maritime commerce and its supporting infrastructure. The Chief of Staff has initiated a review of the Commission's recommendations, with a view to implementing them as appropriate.

I would like to commend Secretary Summers, Attorney General Reno, and Secretary Slater for their leadership in this important initiative. I would also like to express my appreciation to cochair Commissioner Ray Kelly of the U.S. Customs Service, Administrator Clyde Hart of the U.S. Maritime Administration, and Assistant Attorney General Jim Robinson, Department of Justice, to their fellow commissioners, and to the professional staff for their vision and hard work in carrying out this initiative.

**Exchange With Reporters Prior to
Discussions With President Jiang
Zemin of China in New York City**

September 8, 2000

**Permanent Normal Trade Status for
China/National Missile Defense System**

Q. Can you offer any assurances to President Jiang on the China trade bill, that it

will eventually be passed, and on the national defense system that you deferred last week?

President Clinton. I believe the legislation will pass, and I'm pleased at the progress it's making in the Senate. But of course, we still have some work to do. The missile defense issue will be resolved by my successor, although I hope we get a chance to talk about it a little bit today.

Human Rights in China

Q. Mr. President, will you make any requests of President Zemin on the question of human rights as attached to the permanent normal trade relations bill?

President Clinton. We're going to discuss human rights issues, as we always do, but I feel very strongly that PNTR should pass. And I think over the long run it's good for the development of democracy and human rights in China, and I know it's good for America-Chinese relationships over the long run.

United Nations Security Council Summit

Q. Mr. Clinton, I know that yesterday you were present at the P-5 summit, which was a Chinese initiative. So as the President of the United States, also a permanent member of the Security Council, what would you say about the P-5 summit yesterday? And also, how do you see the role of China for international peace and security in this century?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think it was a very good idea by President Jiang to have the P-5 meet. I was amazed that they had never met, or hadn't met in a long time. And I think it was a very good idea. And we actually made a specific decision to, as a group, help the Secretary-General implement his report on peace-keeping and to continue to explore what else we could do together.

I think it might be a forum in the future that would provide an opportunity for Chinese cooperation with the other members of the P-5 in a way that would be very helpful to the rest of the world, as well.

President Fidel Castro of Cuba

Q. Could you describe your encounter with Fidel Castro yesterday?

The President. What Joe said is right. It just happened. There were a whole lot of people in a line. I was talking to them. I turned around, and he was standing there. He apparently had come up and waited, and we must have—the encounter lasted just a few seconds. That's all that happened.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:40 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria. In his remarks, the President referred to White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

September 2

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton visited the New York State Fair in Syracuse. In the afternoon, they traveled from Syracuse to Cazenovia, NY, and in the evening, they returned to Washington, DC.

September 5

In the morning, the President met with Democratic congressional leaders in the Oval Office.

In an afternoon ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Davorin Kracun of Slovenia, Kgosi Seepapitso IV of Botswana, Andres Bianchi of Chile, S Tu'a Taumoepeau-Tupou of Tonga, Atan Shansonga of Zambia, Yusuf Abdulrahman Nzibo of Kenya, Przemyslaw Grudzinski of Poland, Teodoro Biyogo Nsue of Equatorial Guinea, Francisco Javier Ruperez-Rubio of Spain, Leila Rachid-Cowles of Paraguay, Yang Sung-chul of South Korea, Bader Omar Al-Dafa of Qatar, and Jan Kenneth Eliasson of Sweden.